



LA GONÂVE
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PARTNERS

Healthcare Workers: The Lifeline of La Gonave

Monthly Newsletter February 2025



Dr. Lazar with one of the Matrons

The Bill Rice Health Network organized a dinner for the entire healthcare team, which included doctors, nurses, midwives, ajen santé, and matrons. The meal brought the team together from across the island. It offered staff an opportunity to laugh with each other and hear updates about medical needs on La Gonave.

Père Vil attended and shared some encouraging words with staff members. This year, a social doctor joins Dr. Lazar's team, and he is already making a positive impact! Having an extra doctor in the health center makes a huge difference.

The core staff in Nouvelle Cité visit each of the 11 communities we partner with once per month. When they aren't in a community, ajen santé (health agents), and matrons (birth attendants) who live in those communities are on the frontlines of the healthcare network. They are the liaisons between patients and doctors. They improve access to healthcare, healthcare literacy, and are tapped into the needs in their towns in a way that the visiting BRHC staff can't be. Collaboration between these different positions means the Bill Rice Health Network is able to treat more patients.



Clinic staff! Matrons are in green shirts and ajen santé are in blue shirts



A matron speaks to the group



The BRHC team is dedicated to visiting each community once a month, frequently using motorcycles or horseback to navigate challenging terrains. Many roads are often impassable. At the start of the month, heavy rainfall caused numerous roads to wash out, rendering travel to some towns impossible. Such weather events can create significant obstacles for rural communities in obtaining supplies and accessing healthcare. The photos on the left capture the conditions of the roads surrounding Anse-à-Galets following the storm.

Last week, 12th graders, or the terminal classes, from all schools in Anse-à-Galets attended a seminar about St. Thomas Aquinas, theologian and philosopher. The seminar was called *Antenor Firmin*, which is Latin for “I am a strong man.” A representative from the Ministry of Education, as well as a philosophy teacher at the high school, shared words of wisdom with the soon-to-be graduates.

We are excited to see so many bright young people graduating high school on the island! After many years of brain drain, we hope that students educated on La Gonâve can help build up infrastructure and economic development as they grow into leaders.



Terminal Class students at the assembly



Left to Right: Damus Pelens the Vice President of the Central Committee of the school; Nelio Providence, Representative of the Education Ministry on La Gonâve; High School philosophy teacher

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